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AN
ADDRESS
FROM THE
GENERAL COURT,
TO THE
PEOPLE
OF THE
COMMONWEALTH
OF
MASSACHUSETTS.

BOSTON:

PRINTED BY ADAMS AND NOURSE,

PRINTERS TO THE HONOURABLE GENERAL COURT.

M, DCC, LXXXVI.

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Samuel Merrill
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The Committee appointed to prepare an Address to the People, beg leave to report the following.

AN ADDRESS
FROM THE GENERAL COURT,
TO THE PEOPLE
OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF
MASSACHUSETTS.

AT a period, when grievances are complained of, in divers counties of the State; when the symptoms of discontent are manifest and alarming, and individuals resort to arms, to support their disaffection, and oppose the Courts of Justice; it becomes the duty of the Legislature, to investigate, and, as far as may be, to remove the grounds of complaint; to undeceive those, who are misguided by false representation; and if lenient means are ineffectual, to vindicate by vigorous and decisive measures, the honor of government, and provide for the security of the State.

The General Court have therefore employed the greater part of the present session, hitherto, in examining the causes of uneasiness, and the objections made to the measures of government; and in providing (as far as honor and justice would allow)

allow) relief from the burthens, under which the citizens of the Commonwealth have laboured : and we now request the attention of our constituents, to the state of public affairs ; and the reasons, why a compliance with the wishes of some of them, would be dishonorable to us, and injurious to themselves.

We have no doubt, that endeavours are used by evil and designing men, to alienate the affections of the people in general, from those who are concerned in the administration of government ; but conscious of the rectitude of our intentions, we are convinced, that if the public measures are examined with candour, the confidence you lately reposed in us, will not be lessened ; and that however great the public burthens are, attempts have not been wanting on our part, to alleviate them : no man in the community is exempt from those burthens ; the members of the Legislature have their full share ; and can it be thought they would designedly impose unnecessary burthens on themselves, or omit any thing that might tend to their relief from such burthens ? Their duty and their interest, would equally forbid it, for the relief of their constituents would be their own.

As we apprehend a great part of the uneasiness in the State, has arisen from misinformation, we shall in the first place subjoin a state of the public debt, as well the particular debt of this Commonwealth, as this State's proportion of the national or Continental debt.

The

The debt of this Commonwealth is in notes issued by the late Treasurer Gardner, and the present Treasurer, which are called, either consolidated or army notes.

The consolidated notes that have been issued, amount to	£.1,381,675 18 10
The army notes amount to	250,114 14 4
	<hr/>
	1,631,790 13 2
Of the army notes, provision has been made by the tax No.4, for the redemption of	£.140,000
And by tax No. 5, provision is made for the redemption of	100,000
Which being deducted, leaves	240,000 0 0
The notes redeemed and received into the treasury for the sale of lands, &c. amt. to	1,391,790 13 2
Which being subtracted, there remains	34,650 14 8
The notes for which Eastern lands have been sold, and which have not yet been received in the treasury, will amount to	1,357,139 18 6
There remains therefore, due from the Commonwealth, for the redemption of which no provision has been made by tax, notes to the amount of	30,693 0 4
	<hr/>
	£.1,326,446 18 2

Of the consolidated notes above-mentioned, about ninety thousand pounds were issued for the principal and interest of the notes, which had been given before the war by Treasurer Gray; the remainder were issued for money borrowed, and for cloathing, stores, and other goods purchased, and for services performed, since the commencement of the war, at the price in silver, or reduced to that value, by the scale of depreciation.

The army notes were given to the officers and soldiers of this State's line of the army, for their wages, at the rate promised before any depreciation had taken place.

The

The national, or Continental debt, is either foreign or domestic.

The foreign debt being for money borrowed in France, Spain and Holland, according to an estimate made by Congress, amounts to 7,885,085 dollars, which is equal in the lawful money of this State, to	£.2,365,525 10 ●
The annual interest of which, part at 4 and part at 5 per cent. is 369,038 dollars, equal in lawful money, to	110,711 8 ●
This State's proportion of the above-mentioned foreign debt, according to the last requisition, is,	353,925 7 ○
This State's proportion of the annual interest of the foreign debt, is,	16,564 6 ●
The Continental domestic debt, which is due to the citizens of the United States, for the service of the army, and the other expences of the war, and which is on interest at the rate of 6 per cent. was estimated in the year 1783, at about thirty-four million of dollars; but that estimate was formed partly on conjecture, and by the latest accounts from Congress; it is now computed at twenty-seven million of dollars, which is equal, in the lawful money of this State, to,	8,100,000 0 ●
This State's proportion of the Continental domestic debt, according to the last requisition, is,	1,211,906 ○
Of which sum we have now in the treasury of this State, in loan-office certificates and final settlements, received of divers persons on settlement of accounts, for lands, and for the old Continental currency,	49,705 14 ●
Remains,	£.1,162,200 6 ○

Exclusive

Exclusive of the above debt, which is due from the Continent to individuals, each State has a demand upon the confederacy, for money expended and service done for the benefit of the Continent ; this State has large claims, and it is supposed we are considerably in advance ; but there is no ground for the suggestion, that we owe little or nothing of the Continental debt ; for it is to be considered that each of the other States has demands also, and some of them large demands ; and the method of settlement, therefore, must be, to examine the claims of the several States, and the whole that are allowed, will form an aggregate sum, which will be a debt due from the United States to the several States in the Union ; that aggregate sum must then be apportioned on the several States, and if our claims amount to more than our proportion of that sum, we shall have credit for the balance ; but although we think the balance in our favour, on the settlement of these accounts, will be considerable, we have no reason to expect it will be in any measure sufficient to answer our proportion of the above-mentioned domestic debt.

No endeavours have been wanting, on the part of this State, to effect a settlement of the above-mentioned accounts with the Continent ; a Commissioner from Congress some time since attended nearly a year in this State for the purpose of settling accounts ; his attention indeed was chiefly taken up in the settlement of private accounts :
 since:

since that time, another Commissioner has attended as long, for the same purpose : a Committee of two persons, on the part of the State, are chiefly employed in the business : considerable progress has been made ; but the accounts are almost beyond conception numerous, intricate, and of difficult adjustment, owing in a great measure to the different modes, in which the accounts were kept, to the variety, and sometimes the supposed defect of vouchers ; and to the different paper currencies and their different states of depreciation : but we hope the business will be accomplished, as soon as industry can effect it. The other States, have not yet settled their accounts ; until that is done, if ours were settled, we should not be able to know, whether we are in advance or not.

Although from the foregoing statement, it appears that a large debt is due, yet when our resources, and the manner in which payment can be made, are considered ; we think the inhabitants of the Commonwealth will be satisfied, not only that they are able to pay the debt ; but that it may be discharged without greatly distressing them.

The particular debt of this Commonwealth is almost wholly due to its citizens ; the payment therefore will not weaken the State by draining it of its property. Considerable sums are expected from the sale of lands in the easterly part of the State, and every measure that prudence will admit, is taken for the speedy sale of those lands.

Of

Of the national or Continental debt, that part which is due to foreigners, must be paid in gold or silver ; if the Continental impost should take place, which there is much reason to expect, it would immediately discharge us from the interest, and in a few years from the principal of this debt.

Our full share of the Continental domestic debt, is undoubtedly due to the inhabitants of this State ; Congress have resolved, that the lands ceded to them by the individual States, shall be disposed of, for the payment of that debt ; and we have lately received information, that such measures have been taken for surveying those lands, that a very large tract may in a short time be disposed of for that purpose, and that purchasers will not be wanting.

The grant of the supplementary fund is complained of : the reasons why the Legislature adopted that measure, are expressed in the preamble of the act ; and we think ourselves entitled to expect, that no one will condemn the measure before he has attended to those reasons. We hope that means will soon be devised to bring into the treasury of this State, our proportion of the Continental securities ; in that case the act will never operate.

We are informed that the public securities are now disposed of at a lower rate than at any former period : but suppose there was no depreciation upon any of those securities, perhaps the sums we

have paid in taxes, in hiring men, and purchasing supplies for the army; within the last eight years, are more than the whole amount both of our State debt, and our proportion of the Continental debt.

If the public had been able to prevent the depreciation of the public securities, we think strict justice would have required it; but notwithstanding the most solemn promises of future payment, that depreciation has taken place; perhaps therefore a criminal breach of faith is not yet imputable to the public Counsels: but if, when it is within our power, we refuse to redeem the securities; what excuse shall we have? Can we be willing, that the history of the American revolution, shall be blackened with the tale, that we refused to redeem the securities we had given to effect it; and shall our posterity blush to hear of the event, because the perfidy of their ancestors exceeded their *glory*?

Some have observed, that the Continental currency is not redeemed, unless at the rate of seventy-five for one; and propose that the whole debt be reduced by law to the present current value: but is there not a wide difference between the cases? the first emissions of that currency were comparatively small; after it had suffered a depreciation beyond what has happened to any of the public securities, immense sums were brought into circulation; and the public received a consideration for them, not more than at the rate of one for forty or fifty, and perhaps more; it was there-
fore

fore thought unreasonable to redeem them at the nominal value : besides, if the securities should be reduced by law to five shillings on the pound, they would instantly fall in their current value, to one shilling ; there would then be the same reason for reducing them to that sum, and from thence to nothing.

If an individual is involved in debt, both prudence and honesty require him to be frugal, and pay his debt as soon as may be. By a long and expensive war, we incurred a large public debt, tho' far less than that, which our enemies incurred ; but instead of using every effort to pay it, divers persons have employed themselves in devising methods to get rid of it, without payment ; many indeed have employed much more time and money to this end, than (if better employed) might have purchased their whole proportion of the public securities ; they alledge, that many of the first possessors have been obliged to sell them, for little more than one third of their amount, and therefore that the present holders ought to receive no more ; but we should do well to remember, that the public has received the full value of all the notes they have issued ; they were made transferable by law, and many of them have been sold ; but if we had paid them as we promised, very few would have been sold ; and shall we take no measures to pay them now, because we have omitted the payment so long ?

It is said to be unreasonable to compel the man,
who

who has been obliged to sell his securities at a low rate, to redeem them at the nominal value: this observation is made with an ill grace, when every man, who has sold his notes, can purchase them again at a lower rate than he sold them.

The nations of Europe, are unable to maintain war, without borrowing; much less could we: but in case of a war, who would lend us, if our neglecting seven years to pay the sum borrowed, will justify our not paying at all?

Policy, therefore, as well as justice, demand, that we do all in our power to satisfy our creditors. In private life, the man who avails himself of artifice and fraud, will soon find his character blasted, and himself the object of contempt; while he, who incompasped with difficulties, maintains an honest course, may hope for the friendship of man, and the favour of Heaven. The same will be the case in states and communities, so long as righteousness exalteth a nation.

Among the late various complaints, perhaps none is more frequently made, than that the people are ignorant what becomes of their money; that they pay large taxes, and never learn how they are disposed of. We shall therefore state the amount of the several taxes, commencing with the gold and silver tax in 1780, and including the taxes granted since that time, except the tax granted in March last, the payments that have been made on those taxes, the impost and excise, &c. and the manner in which the money, &c. arising therefrom, has been expended. The

The amount of the taxes since 1780, is	£.1,407,895	12	10
Abatements to several towns on those taxes,	£.111,226	2	1
Still due upon those taxes,	279,437	1	1 $\frac{1}{4}$
	<u>390,633</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2$\frac{1}{4}$</u>
Received into the treasury upon the above- mentioned taxes,	1,017,232	9	7 $\frac{1}{4}$
The amount of impost and excise	154,378	6	4
The amount of one per cent. duty on Auc- tioneers,	4,196	0	7 $\frac{1}{4}$
The amount of what has been received for absentees estates sold,	25,283	15	11 $\frac{1}{4}$
Received of Naval-Officers,	2,715	19	2
Anticipated on the several taxes, and on the impost and excise, by the Treasurer's orders,	78,481	4	0
Received of sundry Agents, Commissary- General, &c. &c.	44,090	16	5
	<u>1,326,378</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>1$\frac{1}{4}$</u>

The following is an account of the manner, in which the money, &c. received for taxes, &c. above-mentioned; has been expended.

Warrants drawn on the treasury for the payment of militia-rolls, Continental transfers, repairs of the Castle, pay of the garrison there, officers and soldiers disabled in former wars, officers and soldiers disabled in the late war, Commit- tee to purchase cannon and other warlike stores, accounts allowed by the Commit- tee on accounts, building light-houses, Committee to settle the boundary line between this State and New-York, the survey and sale of Eastern lands, &c. the warrants drawn from October, 1781, to October 1786, although some of the services were performed before,	£.295,588	1	5
Paid to the Continental Receiver of taxes,	169,002	6	0

Mr.

Mr. Appleton's certificates, received for taxes, which are not yet paid to the Continental Receiver,	£.12,894	18	•
Militia rolls for fundry sarvices, and for the pay of three and six months men,	112,427	0	5
For teamsters, paid Col. Jabez Hatch,	18,601	4	5
Col. J. Allan, for Eastern Indian department, freight of cloathing from France, quarters, &c. for the officers of the French army, while in Boston, one and a half years pension to Richard Gridley, Esq; and a balance of a gratuity of twenty-four dollars specie, due to the soldiers of this Commonwealth's line of the army,	8,303	3	2
Warrants for 3 month's pay of the army, in 1780,	30,717	7	0
New emission bills redeemed and burnt,	150,329	15	2
Ditto redeemed, and now in the treasury,	44,146	3	9
Interest paid on the new emission bills,	15,576	5	4
Army notes redeemed,	95,624	2	10
Bounties paid for killing wolves,	1,405	0	0
Interest paid on State notes, from July 1782, to October 1786,	265,371	1	2
Certificate money redeemed and burnt, which was issued in 1781, to purchase stores for the army, and receivable on the tax of that year,	8,364	0	0
Certificate money redeemed and now in the treasury,	9,987	0	0
Allowance to Peter Savory, on account, for supplies from France,	982	16	0
Balance of the gold and silver tax, that was due from Sheriffs, remaining to be by them accounted for,	3,858	1	6
Paid fundry taxes, which became due on absentees estates, before those estates were sold, and fundry resolves of Court to discount such taxes,	3,842	13	3
Paid to Continental Commissary, for wounded officers and soldiers, in addition to what is charged in the first article,	10,335	15	0

Committee

Committee for settling with the army, methodizing public accounts, and settling with the Commissioners of Congress, President and Professors of Harvard-College, since the year 1781, including a grant made to President Langdon, for services previous to that time;	£.2,069 13 8
To members of Congress, from June 1780, to September 1786,	2,362 16 8
Warrants in favour of the former and present Governour, from October 1780, to October 1786;	11,558 8 2
For the members of the Council, at 8s. per day, for each day's attendance at the Council-Board, since the year 1782,	6,150 0 0
For the members of the Senate, from October 1780, to October 1786, at 7/6 per day, for each day's attendance,	3,387 1 10
For the members of the House of Representatives, for their service during the same period, at 7s. per day, for each day's attendance,	9,052 6 1
Treasurer and Clerks, Secretary and Clerks, Commissary-General, Chaplain of the Court, Messengers of the Court and of the Council, and Clerks of the Committee on valuation,	44,865 10 0
The Judges of the Supreme Judicial Court, Attorney-General, in full of his services in that office, before 1783,	6,941 10 2
Committee for revising the laws, and their Clerk,	7,143 11 7
Record-books, stationary and fuel, not paid by Committee of accounts,	3,063 12 0
	209 16 0
	271 19 4
	<hr/>
	1,351,633 19, 11
Deduct what remains unpaid on the warrants in favour of the Governour, the General Court, &c. &c. &c.	25,255 7 9 $\frac{1}{4}$
	<hr/>
	£.1,326,378 12 1 $\frac{1}{4}$

The

The particular accounts of payments from the treasury, are exceeding lengthy, and could not with any convenience be here inserted,

It appears that of the above taxes which have been received into the treasury, the greater part has been disbursed for defraying the expences incurred by the war; more than one hundred and eighty thousand pounds have been collected for the use of Congress, partly in specie to enable them to pay for such services as required prompt payment, to support the federal government, and pay the interest of the foreign debt, and partly in the certificates of Mr. Appleton, for the payment of the interest of the domestic debt.

It also appears, that exclusive of the sums paid to Congress, the public debt has been much lessened. Almost the whole sum expressed in the first article of the account of monies expended, was paid to the militia and for other services and supplies in the war; and was a part of the debt of this state, altho' notes had not been given for it. The new emission bills, and the certificate money, &c. and the warrants for rolls, &c. were also debts of the Commonwealth, altho' the latter were charged to the Continent; and therefore, exclusive of the army notes that are redeemed, more than six hundred and fifty thousand pounds have been paid within the last six years, towards the debt of this state, besides the interest of the notes of this Commonwealth.

The taxes above-mentioned, were all made payable

payable, either in specie or in the new emission currency, or in the army notes, or in the certificate money above-mentioned, or the certificates of Mr. Appleton. Exclusive of these, the people of this Commonwealth have paid large taxes of a different description.

By a resolve of December 3d, 1780, 4240 men were required to be raised by this Commonwealth, for 3 years, or during the war. It appears by the returns of the several towns, that the average price of hiring those men, was £.85 13s.—The expence of the whole, therefore, was	£.363,156 0
By a resolve of March, 1782, 1500 men were ordered to be raised for the like term, the average price of which was £.61 14/8.—The whole expence, therefore, was,	92,350 0
The average price of hiring 2700 men, for three months, in 1781, was £.7.—The whole amounted to,	18,900 0
The average price of hiring 500 men, for five months, in 1781, was £.7.—and the whole amounted to	3500 0
Three beef taxes have been granted, for procuring in the whole, 8,927,115 lb. of beef, which at 4d. per lb. would amount to	148,785 5
The old emission currency redeemed and brought into the treasury, at the rate of 1 for 75, amounted to	122,655 12
	£.749,346 17

The above expence it is manifest was occasioned by the war.

The account of the manner in which the money &c. received for taxes, &c. has been expended, includes all the warrants that have been drawn on
 C. the

the Treasurer from October 1781, to October 1786, the expence of civil government, *to wit*, the Governour, Council, Senate and House of Representatives, Members of Congress, Judges and Attorney-General, Secretary and Treasurer and Clerks, Commissary-General, Chaplain, Messengers, Committee for revising the laws, &c. would, according to this account, be ninety thousand five hundred and forty four-pounds fifteen shillings and two pence, for the last five years : but we find that near the close of the paper-currency, warrants often times were not drawn until a considerable time after the services were performed. In the warrants mentioned in the above account in favour of the members of the General Court and of the Congress, only five thousand six hundred and nineteen pounds 8*l.* 1*d.* was for service performed before October 1781, notwithstanding which we shall consider the above sum of ninety thousand five hundred and forty-four pounds fifteen shillings and two pence; as wholly the expence of civil government the last five years ; it will then follow that eighteen thousand one hundred and eight pounds nineteen shillings, has been the annual expence of government ; about one half of this sum is for the service of the House of Representatives ; their travel is paid by the state, but their attendance is ultimately paid by the towns they respectively represent; their travel is less than one fifth part of the whole sum allowed them, and therefore four-fifths of the expence of the Representatives is not so properly the charge

charge of the Commonwealth in general as of the particular towns that choose them. The Sessions of the General Court since the war, have necessarily been frequent and lengthy. A revision of the laws was found necessary, and has taken much time: the matters to be attended to have been vastly numerous, and a far greater variety of difficult and important questions has arisen than formerly, upon which the people in different parts of the country were divided in sentiment; as the Representatives brought to Court the views of their constituents, the sessions have been lengthened out, by long and interesting debates. The disturbances at different times in the state, have also multiplied and protracted the sessions. These embarrassments we hope are nearly at an end, and whenever they cease, the expences of civil government, will be considerably diminished.

We shall state for your information on this subject, an account of the salaries and emoluments of the several officers of government, before and since the revolution.

The Governour, under the former administration, received a salary of £.1300 in specie, he had the use of the province house, gardens, &c. he also received for every register 5s.— for every certificate under the province seal, 3s.— one third part of all seizures and prizes, a considerable sum from the naval-officer, and other emoluments, amounting, it is supposed, to £.1000 per annum, making in the whole £.2300,— he was also exempted from taxation. The

The Governour, under the present constitution, has the yearly salary of £.1100, no house or accommodations are provided for him, he receives no perquisites or emoluments whatever, and is not exempt from taxes. When the Governour's salary was settled, soon after the constitution, regard was had to the probability that money would soon be as scarce and valuable as it was before the war.

The Lieut. Governour, under the former administration, received no salary; but as Captain of the Castle, received wages, rations, and the benefit arising from passes, all which it is supposed amounted to £.250 per annum; the chief of the time he was a member of the Council.

The Lieut. Governour, under the present constitution, receives no salary as Lieut. Governour: but as Captain of the Castle, he also receives wages, rations, and the like benefit arising from passes, all which, it is supposed, amount to the same sum of £.250 per annum; he is also a member of the Council.

The Judges of the Superior Court, under the former administration, received as follows,—in the year 1774 a salary of £.300 was granted to the Chief Justice, the other four received £.250 each; the fees of office, *to wit*, for the entry of every action 6s. 8d. &c. &c. &c. which they received, paid more than their travelling expences, which were over and above their salary, notwithstanding the business was far less than it is at present; some of the Judges at least, were in other offices, as Judges of Probate, Counsellors, &c. Soon

Soon after the present constitution took place, salaries were granted to the Judges of the Supreme Judicial Court, as follows, *to wit.* To the Chief Justice, £.320 per annum, and to the other four Judges £.300 each. Since that time the jurisdiction of that Court has been much enlarged, new powers have been given to them to permit the sale of lands; they are now the Supreme Court of Probate, they have jurisdiction in all cases of divorce and alimony, which heretofore belonged to the Governour and Council. A Court is also holden in the county of Lincoln. In consideration that their business was greatly increased, by an act of February 1785, an addition of £.50 per annum was made to each of their salaries, to commence January 1, 1784, and continue until January 1, 1787; they are restrained by the constitution from receiving any other emolument whatever; all the fees now taken by them, being deducted out of their salaries: great part of their time is taken up in the service of the Commonwealth, on the circuits, and nearly the remainder on the public business, at their respective homes, in examining matters of law which are continued for their examination and judgment; and it is supposed that the salary of the present Judges, is less than the salary and perquisites of the former Judges.

The Treasurer under the former administration received £.267 per annum, and was Counsellor during the time he was in office: the office in which his business was done, was found him by the government,

the government, besides which an annual grant from £. 100 to £. 120, was made him, for extra-services.

The present Treasurer has £. 350, with a house and office, and his whole time is employed in the business, and cannot have any other advantage whatever.

The Secretary under the former administration, received £. 140 per annum, besides his fees, which are supposed to amount to £. 200 more, in the following manner, *to wit.* for every certificate under the province seal, 2*s.* engrossing acts and laws, 6*s.* each, every commission of a Justice of Oyer and Terminer and Justice of the Peace, 6*s.* 8*d.*—every commission under the great seal, for places of profit, 6*s.* 8*d.*—every order of the General Court for the benefit of particular persons, 6*s.* 8*d.*—every writ for electing Representatives, 5*s.* &c. &c.—and yet his time was not half employed, and additional grants upon many occasions were made him.

The present Secretary has a salary of £. 250 per annum; the fees of office the last year amounted to £. 140, and were deducted from the aforesaid sum. He has no fees of office but what are deducted from his salary, which is not nearly equal to the salary and perquisites of the former Secretary, notwithstanding the service rendered to government is more than double.

Before the war the province had two Agents at the Court of Great-Britain, who received a salary of £. 400 lawful money each.

The Delegates at Congress, received for the last year, thirty three-shillings per day, while they
were

were in service : at the last May session, it was determined that they should receive 2 6. for each day's attendance, for the year, which commenced the first Monday of November current, which is to include every expence.

The officers of Harvard-College now receive the same salaries as they did for a number of years previous to the revolution.

The Clerk of the House of Representatives under the former administration, received from £. 90 to £. 100, and received pay as a member of the Court.

The Clerk of the present House has received at the rate of £. 135 the sessions being more frequent and much longer than formerly, and he cannot be a member of the House.

The Messenger of the General Court formerly received £. 120—The present Messenger receives only £. 80.

It was supposed the avails of the Attorney-General were very small during the war, he was appointed to that office June 12th, 1777.

In January 1779, a grant was made him of £. 900 of the old emission, equal in specie, to

£. 100 0

In May, 1780, another grant was made him, of £. 7500, equal in specie, to

107 0

In March, 1784, a grant was made him in specie, of

1063 12

The whole amount of what has been granted him since his appointment to that office, in 1777, is

1270 12

A

A considerable part of the money granted to the Attorney-General in paper, was not received till its value was much less than the sums to which it is liquidated as above.

From this statement of facts, our constituents will judge, if there is any ground for the suggestion, that the support of civil government is become an insupportable burthen upon the people.

It has been said indeed, that the Governour and the General Court are paid by the Treasurer in money, when other creditors can get nothing, except orders on the Constables of the several towns ; but the present Governour has received only £.15 1/. 3d. $\frac{1}{2}$ more than two quarters of his salary ; the amount of what he has received has not been sufficient to discharge his taxes since his first election to the office of Governour ; and there is not a member of the General Court, who has received a farthing in specie from the Treasurer for his service the present year—nor have they since the constitution took place, received from the treasury nearly so much in money as their actual expences.

The sitting of the General Court in Boston, has occasioned uneasiness ; doubtless it would be more convenient for a part of the State, if it was holden at some other place ; but the interest and wishes of a part, are not to be considered alone : Boston has long been thought the most convenient place : some of the General Court have supposed otherwise ; but the major part were against

a removal, and must the minor part therefore rise against the government? Because they could not have every thing as they wished, could they be justified in resorting to force? Such a principle would destroy all society. Attention, however, has been paid to the instruction of many towns respecting the removal of the General Court out of the town of Boston, and a Committee consisting of a member from each county, has been appointed to consider the subject and report.

It never can be the case, that the whole community shall be of the same opinion; in a republican government the major part must govern: if the minor part governs, it becomes an aristocracy: if every one opposes at his pleasure, it is no government, it is anarchy and confusion.

In some parts of the Commonwealth, it is frequently said, if our Representative goes to Court, he will do us no service; for the measures he is in favour of, will not be adopted: but *why* will they not be adopted? Every measure that is proposed, is attended to, and considered; and if finally rejected, it is because the majority think it inexpedient; and how absurd and contradictory would the proceedings of the Court be, if every proposition should be acceded to.

The complaints in different parts of the State are repugnant, and petitions from different places, request measures directly opposite; it is impossible therefore, that all should be gratified: what then shall be done? Unless we submit to be controuled

by the greater number, the Commonwealth must break in pieces ; but neither will the inhabitants of any county or town be all of the same sentiments, each man therefore must be a part, and the whole reduced to a state of nature.

If then it is plain, that the vote of the major part must govern, the question is, where shall that vote be taken ? Not in a county convention ; because nine-tenths of the State are not represented, and their interest is not attended to. The constitution has pointed out the mode of representation ; and will any one suppose, that because the persons chosen, are called a General Court, they have less integrity or patriotism, than if they were called a convention ?

It is even said by some, that a new constitution is necessary ; and although the sentiments of the persons, who complain, are opposite on this point, the subject may demand some attention. The objection made to the present constitution, is the expence of the government. From the foregoing statement of that expence for the last five years, we find, that if the expence of the House of Representatives is included, it will not exceed eighteen thousand, one hundred and nine pounds by the year ; as there are in the State, more than ninety-four thousand polls, if the whole sum was paid by the polls, each poll must pay three shillings and ten pence and no more ; but as about two-thirds of the taxes are paid by the estates, the

tax:

tax upon a poll, according to the present mode of assessment, would be less than sixteen-pence.

It has been alledged, that the salaries given to the officers of government, are a great burthen.

The Governour has per annum	£ 1100 0 0
The Secretary	250 0 0
The Treasurer	350 0 0
The Judges of the Supreme Court	1775 0 0
The Commissary-General	150 0 0
Total.	3625 0 0

If this sum was wholly paid by the polls, the tax would be no more than nine-pence half-penny upon a poll: it must therefore be apparent to every reasonable man, that the large taxes we have paid have not been applied to the support of civil government.

We have but lately heard that the Senate has been thought by any one to be a grievance; if it has been so considered, we think it must have been owing to inattention; for we are convinced that every judicious man who attends to the nature of our government, will consider that as an important and necessary branch of the Legislature.

Before the constitution was formed every town in the State had a right to send one or more Representatives; the people at that time were very tenacious of this right; it is highly probable they would be so at the present time; perhaps the very persons who complain would not be willing to part with it, for if they preferred a Legislature elected by counties, to one chosen by the several

towns, such an assembly would be constituted like the present Senate, and differ only in name; however, the cost of an experiment would far exceed the sum proposed to be saved, as a revision of the constitution may take place in 1795, when it is to be hoped the minds of men will be in a more tranquil state.

An attempt to form the present constitution was begun in the year 1777, and was not completed until the year 1780; the cost and trouble attending it, we all remember were exceeding great, and perhaps nothing would finally have been agreed to, if an unusual spirit of mutual condescension had not prevailed; a sense of common danger from abroad produced internal harmony and union: But what hope could we now have of that mutual compliance, which would be necessary to agree upon a form of government; when the tempers of so many are in a state of irritation? Should the present government be overthrown, a state of general confusion would ensue; and after we had experienced all the horrors of anarchy, and the effects of unrestrained violence and revenge, our dear earned freedom, would probably be swallowed up, by domestic despotism or foreign dominion.

The constitution is as free and popular as the preservation of society will admit; and indeed some have feared, it is more so; it has been highly applauded by foreigners and approved by the people: all persons employed in the legislative or executive

cutive parts of government, depend annually upon the people for their choice ; if the people are dissatisfied with their conduct, they have an opportunity yearly to appoint others, in whom they can more fully confide. Can there be any necessity then, of resorting to irregular, or violent measures, to obtain redress of grievances ?

That the people are overburthened with taxes is said to be a grievance : the taxes have indeed been very great ; perhaps the General Court have misjudged of the abilities of their constituents, but it may be that those who complain, if they knew the state of the public debt, and the motives of the Legislature, would be satisfied. We shall therefore state them.

The sums applied to the use of the United States, were esteemed by Congress to be indispensably necessary ; and the General Court in former years supposed they could not with any regard to their duty as a part of the union, refuse the payment ; nor could we think ourselves under less obligations to provide for the payment of that part of the tax granted in March last, which is appropriated to the use of the Continent.

The necessity of a speedy payment of the before mentioned part of that tax, is complained of as a grievance. By the resolve of Congress of Sept. 27th, 1785, it was provided, that the Commissioners of the Continental Loan-Office should not on any pretence whatever, issue any certificates for the interest of the Continental debt, until the State
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for which he was Loan-Officer, should have passed a Legislative act, complying with the requisition in the said resolve; and by the same resolve it was required, that the Legislature of each State should provide in the act complying with that requisition, that if on the first day of January, 1787, the said certificates should not be in the hands of some proper officer, the deficiency should be paid in specie: it was therefore absolutely necessary, that the act should be constructed as is was, otherwise no certificates could have been issued; notwithstanding which, application is now made to Congress, that the term for receiving those certificates may be prolonged.

The army notes were made payable, one third part in 1784, one third in 1785, and the remainder in 1786. The service of the officers and soldiers of the late army, was acknowledged by all to be exceedingly meritorious, and perhaps no part of the community had greater reason to complain of grievances than they. It was represented that many of them were urgent to have the notes redeemed: they were issued upon this express condition, that they should be receivable in the first taxes after they should become payable, and the General Court well knew, that if the abilities of the people were sufficient, it would be greatly for their advantage to redeem them.

We think the observations that have been made will explain the necessity of that part of the taxes, which has been applied to the support of civil government.

vernment. With regard to the residue of the taxes it is apparent, from the manner in which the expenditures have been made, that they were occasioned by the war. When the war first commenced, the people solemnly engaged to each other to carry it on until they obtained security of their rights, altho' their *lives* and *fortunes* should be the *price of the purchase*: if there was the least truth or sincerity in these declarations, could it be supposed, they would individually grudge the contribution of their part of the expence, when the event exceeded their most sanguine expectations.

Public credit is one of the most important trusts committed to the Legislature; in proportion as that declines, the State is weakened and in danger. It is of the same importance to a community, as a character for truth is to individuals. The want of a paper currency has been complained of as a grievance; but we find that in divers places where complaints have arisen, the idea of a paper currency is rejected with marks of great disapprobation. Indeed a little attention to the subject, we conceive, must satisfy every intelligent and unprejudiced mind, that the emission of such a currency would be exceedingly prejudicial. If it could be carried into circulation, the solid coin would be exported, the morals of the people would become more depraved, designing men would practice innumerable frauds; and if it should ever afterwards be redeemed, it would plunge the State in deeper distress: If it should not be redeemed, it
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would cause the ruin of many individuals, and brand the State with infamy. And upon whom would that ruin fall? Not upon the artful and unprincipled, they would gain by the fraud; not upon the prudent and discerning, they would be guarded against it; but the loss would chiefly happen to the *widow* and the *orphan*, the simple and unwary; the most innocent and defenceless part of the community; that part, whose interests the Legislature ought to defend with peculiar attention. The widow and orphan are the special charge of the Supreme Being, and all are enjoined to exercise vigilance and tenderness for their welfare. This injunction every man, possessed of natural affections, must feel the force of; for who can tell how soon his wife and his children may fall a prey to sharpers and speculators; if a paper money system shall be adopted.

A full experiment of this State's ability to uphold the credit of a paper medium, was made in the case of the new emission: the faith of the United States, and of this State, were both pledged for its support; a fund was provided, sufficient to pay the interest; and although, when it first came into circulation, it passed at the rate of one and seven-eighths for one, interest to a large amount in silver was paid upon the nominal sum; notwithstanding which, at the very time the interest was paying, the currency rapidly depreciated.

We presume there is not a man in the State,
who

who supposes, that if we emitted a paper currency, it would not depreciate ; and if it depreciates, it will pass at different rates, in different places, and to different persons, at the same time ; it will therefore produce the same effect as divers weights and divers measures, which we are assured are an abomination.

We feel in common with our neighbours the scarcity of money ; but is not this scarcity owing to our own folly ? At the close of the war, there was no complaint of it ; since that time, our fields have yielded their increase, and heaven has showered its blessings on us, in uncommon abundance ; but are we not constrained to allow, that immense sums have been expended, for what is of no value, for the gewgaws imported from Europe, and the more pernicious produce of the West-Indies ; and the dread of a paper currency impedes the circulation of what remains : It is said however, that such a currency would give us present relief ; but like the pleasure of sin, it would be but for a reason ; and like that too, it would be a reproach to the community, and would produce calamities without end.

Until the people can forget the injuries and frauds occasioned by paper currencies, in their own time ; we think they must be satisfied, of the inexpediency and injustice, of making new emissions.

Within a few years the habits of luxury have exceedingly increased, the usual manufactures of

the country have been little attended to. That we can buy goods cheaper than we can make them, is often repeated, and is even become a maxim in economy, altho' a most absurd and destructive one. While these habits continue, the wisest Legislature will not be able to remove our complaints: The emission of a paper currency, and such like expedients, may seem to refresh us for a moment; but they will serve to fan the flame, that must eventually consume us.

Without a reformation of manners, we can have little hope to prosper in our public or private concerns. At the close of the war we greedily adopted the luxurious modes of foreign nations. Although our country abounds with all the necessaries of life, the importations from abroad, for our own consumption, have been almost beyond calculation; we have indulged ourselves in fantastical and expensive fashions and intemperate living; by these means our property has been lessened and immense sums in specie have been exported. Government is complained of, as if *they* had devoured them; and the cry of many persons now is, make us paper money. This request is next in point of imprudence, to that of the Israelites to Aaron, to make them a calf; and a compliance would be but a little more honorable or advantageous, in the one case, than it was in the other.

As the difficulty in paying debts increased, a disregard to honesty; justice and good faith, in public
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dic and private transactions become more manifest. That virtue, which is necessary to support a Republic, has declined; and as a people, we are now in the precise channel, in which the liberty of States has generally been swallowed up. But still our case is not desperate; by recurring to the principles of integrity and public spirit, and the practice of industry, sobriety, economy, and fidelity in contracts, and by acquiescing in laws necessary for the public good, the impending ruin may be averted, and we become respectable and happy.—By such means, we may falsify the invidious predictions our enemies, that we should crumble to pieces, and should be too corrupt to maintain republican freedom. In such a cause we may hope, that the God of our fathers, who has defended us hitherto, will prosper the work of his own hands, and save the fair structure of American liberty from falling into ruin.

We make no boast of uncommon skill in legislation; but sacredly regarding the oaths we have taken, we claim the merit of upright designs, and of pursuing as far as we can judge, a system formed on the principles of justice, and calculated to promote the honor, the safety and happiness of the State.

In a Commonwealth, where a spirit of unreasonable jealousy and a complaining temper, are indulged and countenanced, it will be impossible to give satisfaction to the people: if Angels in such case were to govern us, opposition would be made to

to their administration ; indeed we have a striking instance that when such humours prevail, even the authority of the Supreme Being will be thought a grievance. The people of Israel were under his particular care and government ; He was their Law-giver and Judge ; He delivered them from their oppressors ; He led them through the sea ; He rained them down the corn of Heaven, and sent them meat to the full ; but notwithstanding, they complained of His government and wantonly provoked His anger ; like that people, we have experienced astonishing testimonies of the divine favour. God forbid ! that like them, we should requite him with murmuring and ingratitude, and provoke him to destroy us.

When the people are distressed with the conduct of any government, it may at least deserve a reflection, whether the difficulty is not with themselves. At the last election in this State, perhaps a greater number of new Members were returned, than at any former period ; they came together with a fixed design, to gratify their constituents, in every thing which the interest of the community would permit ; and they never lost sight of that object ; notwithstanding which, greater dissatisfaction with public measures is expressed at this time, than ever before since the revolution. The Legislature have attended to all the petitions that have been presented, and all the complaints that have been made ; so far as justice will allow, they will comply with the requests in those petitions,

petitions and remove the grounds of those complaints. If they possess abilities and integrity equal to the other members of the community, the advantages they derive from the information collected from all parts of the State, and a public discussion of subjects, render them more capable to judge, of the fitness of public measures; but if they are to have the favour of the people, and a voice in the public Councils, only on condition of their establishing iniquity by law, they are willing to lose the shameful pre-eminence.

The General Court have heard with inexpressible concern, of the insurrections in several counties of the State. The pretence that the Court of Common Pleas, is a grievance, affords but a wretched excuse for such outrageous proceedings; that Court, except a small alteration in the name, has existed time immemorial; no complaints were heard against it in former times; no application has been made to the Legislature before this session to abolish it. The fees, except those of Jurors and witnesses, are in many instances less, and we think in none greater than they were before the war. Provision has been made to enable the citizens to settle their demands without resorting to that Court, if they are disposed to do it; several years since, the Justices of the Peace were authorized to take acknowledgements of debts, even to the largest amount; and more lately an act was passed to enable any persons in difference, who could agree to refer their disputes, to resort to a Justice
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and enter into a rule for that purpose, without being subject to the expence of an action. But if the Court of Common Pleas has been by any supposed unnecessary, how surprizing then, the idea, that any persons could think themselves justified, in opposing by force, an ancient institution, without taking a single step to obtain redress in a regular method. But not content with obstructing the Courts of Common Pleas, the disaffected have taken arms to prevent the sitting of the Supreme Judicial Court, against which, not a single complaint has been uttered. These proceedings are the more alarming, as they can be accounted for, only on the supposition, that the instigators wish to subvert all order and government, and reduce the Commonwealth, to the most deplorable state of wretchedness and contempt.

In this view, our situation appears exceedingly alarming; sufficiently so, to arrest the most serious attention, and summon the united efforts, of all orders in the State. Some persons have artfully affected to make a distinction between the government and people, as though their interests were different and even opposite; but we presume, the good sense of our constituents will discern the deceit and falsity of those insinuations. Within a few months the authority delegated to us will cease, and all the citizens will be equally candidates in a future election; we are therefore no more interested to preserve the constitution and support the government, than others: but while the

the authority given us continues, we are bound to exercise it for the benefit of our constituents. And we now call upon persons of all ranks and characters to exert themselves for the public safety. Upon the Ministers of religion, that they inculcate upon the minds of their people, the principles of justice and public virtue; that they earnestly endeavour to impress them with sentiments of reverence to the Deity and benevolence to men, and convince them of the ruinous effects of luxury and licentiousness. Upon the officers of every denomination, that they endeavour to inform the ignorant; and by their examples of economy, to induce others to the practice of the same virtue; and that they use their utmost efforts to suppress the insurrections of such lawless and violent men, as may wish to pull down the fabric of law and government, and level it with the dust. And upon the whole body of the people, that they provide for the instruction of the rising generation; that they practice all those virtues which are the ornament and strength of society, and abstain from those vices and follies, that weaken the State, and have a tendency to its ruin; and especially that they oppose with fortitude and perseverance, all attempts to impede the course of justice and render their own lives and property insecure.

Many who disapprove insurrections against the government, neglect to afford their aid, in suppressing them; but to stand still, inactive spectators in such case, is like a man who when his house is

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in flames, should stand with folded arms, and console himself with this, that he did not set it on fire.

We persuade ourselves, that the far greater part of those who have been concerned in the late dangerous tumults, have been deluded by the false representations of men who go about to deceive ; and we wish them to reflect how fatal such proceedings may prove in the issue, to themselves and their children ; that they must increase the public burthens, and embarrass the measures calculated for relief ; that it is their own constitution and laws they are endeavouring to overthrow ; that this constitution and these laws were formed for the safety of every member of the State ; and that the man who attempts to subvert those laws, and that constitution, does in effect make an attempt upon the life, liberty and property of every member of the community ; and we conjure them, by all that they hold dear and sacred, forthwith to desist from such ruinous pursuits.

Perhaps there are some, who deaf to the voice of reason, and lost to all sense of justice and virtue, may resolve to continue in their dangerous course ; but let them be assured, although they flatter themselves that the considerations of friendship and affinity, may delay the time of recompence ; yet the vengeance of an injured community, must one day, pursue and overtake them.

TREASURY-OFFICE, 27th October, 1786.

I HAVE examined and compared the statements that are here presented to the public, and so far as respects the accounts in this office, I find they are just and true.

THOMAS IVERS, Treasurer.

IN SENATE, OCTOBER 30, 1786.

THE foregoing Address was read and accepted; and thereupon,

ORDERED, That the Secretary cause twelve hundred copies thereof, to be printed as soon as may be; each Member of the Legislature to be furnished with one copy, and one copy to be sent to each of the Ministers of the several parishes, and the Clerks of the several towns, districts and plantations, within this Commonwealth. And the said Ministers are required to read the same to their respective assemblies, on Thanksgiving-Day, immediately after divine service, or to call a Lecture and read the same on that occasion; and in both cases they are requested to give notice on the preceeding Sabbath, of the time when the same will be read.— And the Clerks of the said towns, districts and plantations, are directed to read the same at the next meeting of the towns, districts or plantations, to which they respectively belong; and where no such meeting is to be held at an early period on other business, the Selectmen of such town, district or plantation, are directed to call a meeting specially for that purpose.

Sent down for concurrence.

SAMUEL PHILLIPS, jun. President.

IN the HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES, Nov. 14, 1786.

Read and concurred.

ARTEMAS WARD, Speaker.

True copy.

Attest.

JOHN AVER Y, jun. Secretar.

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